

Statement of Martin Sbriglio
before the
Aging Committee
February 5, 2013

Sen. Ayala, Rep. Serra and members of the committee:

My name is Martin Sbriglio. I am president and chief executive officer of Ryder's Health Management, Inc., that owns and operates several long-term care facilities in Connecticut. We are not some out-of-state conglomerate; we are a family-owned company that has tried to do the best we can in serving the needs of our patients for 63 years.

I would like to offer brief comments on several bills. Overall, I would ask that you not add to our mandated burdens and requirements unless you are willing to fully cover the cost of that mandate. The nursing home sector is in deep trouble, largely because the Medicaid payments we receive do not begin to cover the cost of care. More and more homes are losing money, entering receivership or filing for bankruptcy. This simply is not the time to mandate that we do more when we continue to lose ground financially. I would point out that our Medicare rates were reduced by about 11 percent last year due to federal budget cuts.

SB 519—requires us to adopt a manual and train staff in not retaliating against residents who might have a complaint. The premise of this bill is that, somehow, those of us who have dedicated our lives to caring for the frail elderly will now “retaliate” against them. It is an outrageous premise, frankly. The manual and required training simply adds another burden on us as we work day in and day out to provide high quality care to those who need it.

HB 5763—requires us to establish a grievance committee where residents can meet with staff when issues arise. There already is a grievance committee, although it is called a resident council. Administrators are not allowed to attend unless invited. This bill would add a redundant regulation where none is needed.

HB 5766—requires facilities to have appropriate temperatures in our resident's rooms. We already do so—but the point is, will you reimburse us for the cost of installing or upgrading this equipment if we are served with a notice of violation? This bill would encourage a “gotcha” mentality where even the slightest temperature deviation could trigger a \$1,000 fine.

HB 5761—this bill really is out of line. It would hold me criminally liable for the acts of an employee were they to neglect or abuse a resident. Please name one industry sector where you hold someone responsible for an act that they have nothing to do with? Not to mention that the premise of this bill, again, is that somehow those of us who take care of the frail elderly as our life's cause would not do everything we can to ensure that our residents are comfortable and happy.

The above bills put more work on my staff for very little purpose. The time they spend on record keeping or attending meetings will increase, while taking away their time to be with the residents. I would simply ask you to “do no harm” to us. Please take no action on these bills. The industry is struggling and needs your help. The state mandates that we

care for low-income patients, but then pays us well below what our care really costs. That's the real problem that deserves your continued attention. Thank you.